Afterword

An Investigation into the Present Political State of the World

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Without understanding, the contemporary stands before world events [*Weltgeschehen*]. What is happening, from what causes and to what end? Was this best of all worlds reasonable after all until now, and has now fallen into insanity; revolutions follow one another and nations rage against themselves. But the world was neither reasonable until recently, nor has it now suddenly fallen into madness. A rift [*Riz*] has gaped from the beginning. There are times that cover it with all kinds of shrubbery, generations of men who want to walk carelessly along it or look away and deny it, and others who, forced to look into it, shuddering back want to turn away and yet cannot. We have stepped out of an age of the first into an age of the second kind.

What remains to us is the attempt to understand what we are unable to deny. In the chaos [*Wirrwarr*] of events to search for the total context [*Gesamtzusammenhang*], to unthread the concatenation [*Verkettung*] of the eternal driving forces of the human race and its eternal powers of fate [*Schicksalsmächte*] in world events, not to draw comfort from a cheap faith in any sense and purpose, to look the hardness of things in the face, not to beg that this cruel face deceive us about itself through feigned mildness — if ever, then today, in the midst of unspeakable confusion of things, men, and spirits, this is the only ground from which an action can emerge that does not want to be mastered as an ignorant being-pushed [*Geschobenwerden*] by blind things, but wants to master them.

Three crises seem to me, manifoldly intertwined with one another, to shake the age. An extra-political [*außerpolitische*] crisis of the international organization of the world, in particular of Europe, an inner-political [*innerpolitische*] crisis of states and forms of state, and a crisis of society. Each of these three crises has its economic side. Its deviations reach everywhere into the smallest hut. But while the economic effects are widely discussed and ultimately obvious to everyone, the political causes remain distorted and darkened by the conflict of nations and parties. Not to exhaust their deeper context [*Zusammenhang*], but at least to outline it, not to spy out from their entanglement the sense or nonsense of what is coming, but yet perhaps in some measure to promote reflection, is the purpose of this investigation.

1.

I.

Some out of ignorance and lack of education, others out of political enmity and for inner- or extra-political purposes believe or pretend to believe that this World War, which has become a world catastrophe [*Weltkatastrophe*], arose only from historically accidental mistakes of individual states or statesmen, or was imposed upon the nations and their relations to one another through diplomatic artifice [*diplomatische Kunst*]. This delusion is promoted by an inclination implanted in the human race to see the evil of this world and all its misery not in the world itself, but in the sins of individual human beings who have strayed from the paths of the good and rational. He who seeks historical insight [*geschichtliche Erkenntnis*] must first of all renounce this inclination. The truth is harder. The political situation of the world before the outbreak of the war was untenable. It had slowly and with inner necessity become untenable. That does not mean that the war had to break out precisely in the year 1914 and in this constellation, and end in this way. The detail is human work [*Menschenwerk*] and in its entanglement: luck [*Glück*], skill [*Geschick*], unskillfulness [*Ungeschick*],

and misfortune [*Mißgeschick*].

The world before the war, and Europe in particular, was organized in national states that faced one another in continuously increasing and technically perfecting armaments. Whoever did not want to be outstripped believed he had to outstrip; whoever alone was outstripped had to seek an ally of equal opposition [*Verbündeten gleicher Gegnerschaft*]: out of the rivalry of national states became the rivalry of alliance systems. The European balance of power [*Gleichgewicht*] had become again, according to a word of Kant, the balance of a house that collapses when a joke [*Spaß*] settles on one side of the roof. It collapsed after all possibilities of expansion were exhausted. The more the further and closer pre-history of the war was investigated, the clearer he sees who seeks not bias [*Tendenz*], guilt, and propaganda, but insight [*Erkenntnis*], that already the last decades before the war were nothing other than an uninterrupted hot struggle [*heißes Ringen*] for the last possibilities of political and military superiority and, in the best case, for the last reprieves of a temporary postponement [*vorübergehender Aufschub*].

Europe did not step unexpectedly before the abyss of war in July 1914, led by Serbian carbonari and their backers [*Hintermänner*] or by a reckless diplomacy of Vienna or Berlin. So simple and bourgeois [*bürgerlich*] lie things not. It went staggering and groping along this abyss from the moment when the deployment [*Aufmarsch*] of Europe into two separate alliance systems was completed and the possibility of armament on both sides approached its limit reachable in a state of peace.

The attempts that were made by English Liberals or German statesmen in those years to remedy the dangerous division of Europe into two alliance camps through gradual mitigation failed. The history of these attempts, clarifying today, shows that they were likely to fail at this stage of development. They failed because of the no longer alterable interlocking [*Ineinandergreifen*] of the alliance systems, which had congealed into

mechanisms with their own laws [*Mechanismen eigener Gesetzlichkeit*], because of the laws of European statics [*Gesetze der europäischen Statik*]. When Russian politics in the year 1910 was supposed to confirm soon thereafter in writing the agreement concluded orally between the two emperors, according to which neither of the two states should join an aggressive combination against the other, it refused to do so in order not to justify the impression that the oral agreement had already awakened in France.

Likewise, two years later, England rejected the meaningless neutrality formula that the German Imperial Chancellor Lord Haldane had proposed, explicitly only for the sake of the distrust that would have been awakened by such a formula among the nations friendly and allied with England. Neither of the two powers dared to take upon itself even the tenderest appearance of a beginning change of constellation [*Konstellationsveränderung*]: the alliance system was so stuck [*festgefahren*] and the political effect of any change so unclear and uncalculable [*unübersehbar*] that no one dared to touch the reached balance of power. On the other side it was no different.

When Sasonow in the spring of 1914 made the remark to Robert von Mendelssohn: *"Si vous lâchez l'Autriche, je lâcherai la France,"* German policy, despite its knowledge of the increasing weakness of its ally, could hear nothing on this ear, because according to the situation at that time even the appearance of such a step — betrayed to Vienna by way of the Western powers — would with greater probability have loosened the Austro-German as well as the Franco-Russian alliance. Thus the unpredictability [*Unberechenbarkeit*] and uncertainty [*Ungewißheit*] of every step mitigating the splitting of Europe into two camps held both groups of powers fast in the position once assumed, and at any impulse in this direction both alliance systems snapped back into their previous position like strongly stretched rubber bands, yielding only little.

That is the general characteristic of diplomacy in these years, and there is hardly an event that could not be cited to its confirmation. From 1908 to 1914, war was averted by a hair's breadth on repeated occasions, in the year 1911 because Russia was not ready, on the occasion of the Balkan troubles in 1912 and 1913 because England did not want to and Germany, in order to preserve peace, fell upon the reins [*in die Zügel fiel*] of its ally, and still in the spring of 1914, for a completely insignificant occasion, the appointment of General Liman von Sanders as commander of the 1st Turkish Corps, because Germany effected a change in his employment upon Russian displeasure.

The localization of the Serbian-Austrian war in the year 1914 failed because England and France, although in my conviction not resolved upon war in the first days after the ultimatum, did not dare to advise Russian policy against general mobilization, in the anxiety [*Beklemmung*] that out of a Russian retreat a diplomatic success of the Central Powers might arise, and out of Russian displeasure over this a new orientation of Russian policy and hereby a shift of the European system of forces [*Kräftesystem*] might emerge. More powerful than the work of individual men was the mechanism of things [*Mechanismus der Dinge*].

I say this only for the sake of the future, which is preparing to fall, in another form, into a no less tragic mechanism.

2.

The great dice game [*Würfelspiel*] of war is over. Fate has decided first against Russia, then with a severity [*Härte*] still unimaginable today against Germany. The war has not solved, could not solve, the tragic problem from a series of causes. In more than one respect it has sharpened it and made its even provisional solution with the previous means of politics and in the old sense even more difficult.

The only hope of avoiding war stood before its outbreak not on a common morality [*Gemeinsame Moralität*] of the states — which, however much the

moralist and human being must demand it, the impeccably discerning one [*Unbestechlich-Erkennende*] can hardly discover, for hitherto the states as such, despite all moral words to the outside, have been essentially malevolent [*bösartig*] — 1) but in a common interest to be grasped by a cool reason [*kühle Vernunft*], which should have presented war to them all as a business that, in its outcome unpredictable, in any case however burdened with enormous costs and comparatively small chances of profit, wants to buy a result questionable at best even for the victor with an enormous stake [*Einsatz*].

The course of the war has first proved that the outcome of wars of this kind escapes all calculation [*Berechnung*]. Germany gave the gain of the war out of its hand before and at the Marne, Russia gambled away an easy success in East Prussia in 1914 — for longer than three years good fortune and misfortune staggered back and forth. When once the history of this war and its political-military leadership can be clarified, both sides will see repenting and shuddering how close they themselves and how close the others grazed past the abyss of ruin.

Each partner held himself up through the mistakes of the other. If the battles of many theaters of war interlock in reciprocal interaction [*Wechselwirkung*], luck in war becomes doubly blind. Even the ultimate victor cannot say: our calculation was correct, for it depended not only on him that it did not prove to be false. As long as this experience of statesmen lasts and becomes the insight of nations, it may deter from future wars. The same effect may and must the memories of the war participants of the terrors of what was experienced in the trenches do. The same applies to the after-effects of the enormous sacrifices of property and blood brought by the nations, which must be felt bitterly enough even by the victors for decades. But all that brings no solution to the unsolved problem of the political organization of this planet. It reinforces the longing [*Sehnsucht*] for such a solution, but shows as yet no way. Longing alone does not do it;

generations change, and violated and torn-apart nations do not forget.

3.

The question of armaments seemed before the war solvable only through war. The war has not solved it. On the contrary, only the war has openly brought to light a strange fatality [*Verhängnis*], continually increasing with necessity, in the life of present-day nations: the tragedy of technical progress [*Tragik des technischen Fortschritts*]. The struggle of nations for life and death has forced inventions upon inventions from the human spirit on both sides. Squadrons of aircraft, airships, tanks, submarines, poison gases, cannons of hitherto unimagined strength or range: need and distrust in the plans of others moved the one side to see no limits of humanitarian shyness [*humanitäre Scheu*] or financial timidity in the application of these means. Under such compulsion and such financial fertilization, technology performed what shortly before was still impossible.

It is too early to clarify fully the fatal effect of the technical factor on the origin of the war, too early also to untangle the influence of technical inventions, the direct as well as the widely ramified indirect, on the decisions and resolutions of the one as well as the other from the chaos of interconnections, and to show how the cruelty of the war means that have grown in this way has increased the peace-obstructing hatred of the nations into the immeasurable, completely unbridgeable, how the hope for a fast, fortunate end, ever newly strengthened by new astonishing inventions, kept the governments and military commands [*Armeeleitungen*] of both sides from sacrificing realities of the present and hopes of the future to peace, contenting themselves with half-successes or failures.

Peace inherits the inventions of war. It will and cannot bury them in army museums. It will and must, as long as states and nations face one another lurkingly and suspiciously like beasts of prey [*Raubtiere*], preserve, cultivate, and further develop them. What if the one neglected this and left it to the other? And not only this cultivation and further development, but

also this preservation is for more than one reason a thousand times more difficult and oppressive than before the war and must therefore, when political means are again exhausted, lead even faster, even more unavoidably, to new discharges.

Does one believe that preparations for such a refined and such a coarsened machine warfare [*Maschinenkrieg*] are even possible, that distrust in a possibly new and this time decisive invention of the political opponent above or under water, on land or in the air, would not bring a completely unbearable state of permanent unrest over the leadership of states and the feelings of nations, that the ratio of power [*Kräfteverhältnis*] of nations would not become even more opaque and unpredictable than ever before. The facts of technology are known to the war participants of all nations, and yet politicians hesitate to acknowledge that their accustomed world of thoughts [*Gedankenwelt*] is overturned by these facts.

1) This too Immanuel Kant, although among the idealists the greatest and standing furthest from the life of states, had to confess to himself painfully. Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace* [*Zum ewigen Frieden*], First Appendix: *On the Disagreement Between Morality and Politics* [*Über die Mißhelligkeit der Moral und Politik*]. Kant's Works (Cassirer Edition) VI, 456. He believes, to be sure, for comfort, that this malevolence of states also lies in the plan of nature, which, making use of them as an unconscious tool, strives toward a final purpose, perpetual peace. But this opinion springs from nothing other than the inclination inborn in the human race to foresee undeviatingly a sense and plan of the world even where such cannot be recognized.

4.

But technology is not alone; with it and through it the financial question has also shifted. Financially too, armaments after the war are not comparable to those before the war. The costs of war still weigh upon the states. Not only the vanquished, but also some of the victors border on

bankruptcy [*Bankrott*]. To impose new armaments upon the exhausted tax capacity, and indeed incomparably more expensive according to quantity and quality, is madness in the interest of these states themselves. And yet it will happen if power does not become rational or reason does not become powerful [*wenn die Macht nicht vernünftig oder die Vernunft nicht mächtig wird*].

Let no one deceive himself about the state of the world and in particular of Europe, which must result from such a development. The roles may have changed; the old game, even more terrible, even more dangerous, begins anew. Armaments of exhausted, continuously more exhausting states, in their train an inner situation becoming more unbearable from decade to decade, the rising temptation to end this untenable state by any path, even that of despair; lurking distrust between states, increasing with every new invention, with the unpredictability [*Unübersehbarkeit*] of technical development leading now the one, now the other into temptation to overstretch political claims in a accidental superiority of the moment. And this state of factual power relations [*faktische Machtverhältnisse*], sharpened by the reciprocal interaction of the psychological condition of the nations resulting from it and reacting back upon it, a nervous unrest which the statesmen of our time dependent on public opinions are able to withstand, perhaps with difficulty and for a short span of time, but certainly not as a rule and in the long run. Let one not speak of exaggerations: he who wishes to deceive himself may do so and trot anew the path of habit.

5.

What shall become [*Was soll werden*]? Two hopes seem conceivable and are discussed. The one wants to see the remedy on the ground of the hitherto existing world order in a new constellation of the Great Powers, the other wants to reorganize through a League of Nations [*Völkerbund*] the forms of coexistence of nations and the settlement of their disputes: for the first fought France, for the second the President of the United States; the result

of this struggle, the Peace of Versailles [*Friede von Versailles*], passes judgment on itself [*richtet sich selbst*].

As things lie today, even the most hopeful enthusiast [*Schwärmer*] cannot attribute to the present shape of the League of Nations the capacity to establish an organization of the political world that is not merely apparent but factually new. The old forces are powerful as before, and their means have remained the same. The war has brought England and the United States hegemony over the world [*Vorherrschaft über die Welt*]. With the caution of English policy in all American questions, with the free and broad space of action of both powers, each of which has for itself the greatest tasks to fulfill and enough to move its hands alongside one another probably for decades, the extra-European world can, despite Canadian and East Asian friction surfaces, count for some time yet on quiet prosperity.

Different is the European continent. Here the war has ended with a French hegemony over a balkanized Europe, tolerated by England. This result is untenable. It must lead to permanent unrest and ever new conflicts and, in one way or another, to sudden ruin or slow lingering sickness [slow decay] of the European continent.

It is idle today, but yet instructive for the peculiarity of the European fatality [*europäisches Verhängnis*], to examine what solutions the defeated states, Russia and the Central Powers, had to offer the world in the event of their victory.

The Russians were near to victory both during the autumn campaign of the year 1914 in East Prussia and during the spring of 1915 in the Carpathians, and indeed a victory that, in view of the dangerous military-political situation of their own allies, could have procured them an undisputed political preponderance [*politisches Übergewicht*] given skillful political handling. A perspective of which not only the affected Central Powers, but also the allies of Russia themselves could not think without terror. That a victorious Pan-Slavic Russia had only an imperialistic-Russian, but no

European, let alone a world solution to offer, even a Russian will not deny.
A unification of all Slavs under the scepter of Moscow, extending from East Prussia to the Adriatic and the Aegean Sea, enclosing the Black Sea and sooner or later reaching the Gulf of Alexandretta and the Persian Gulf, forced by inner as well as outer reasons to subjugate and to keep subjugated with strong military and police means, certainly incapable and probably also unwilling to develop the freedom of human beings and to respect the life of nations. Thus a solution more Asian than European, against which to assert themselves sooner or later the allies of Russia would probably have sought to ally themselves with their previous opponents.
Within a short time the world would have bristled in arms anew, perhaps destroyed itself further in even more terrible wars. This Russian solution is not the solution of a Russian party, but the genuine, truly Russian one, borne by the mystical faith in the Russian world mission [*russische Weltmission*], which under altered words and gestures is alive among the officials of the old regime, the liberal professors of the middle parties, and the fundamentally no less All-Russian mystical rulers of the Russia of today, the heirs of Bakunin.
Reflection upon the many eventualities of the World War that did not occur through any political and military contingencies reveals to the human spirit, which likes to believe in simple contexts or even in world purposes, the uncertainty of groping, continuously stumbling fate. If ever English statesmen were to reveal their secret deliberations and anxieties during the World War in memoirs, it would presumably be seen that no less than German victories and the temporary successes of the submarine war, Russian possibilities of victory were the subject of these worries, that the strongest motive and argument of the English opponents of war before the outbreak of the war was the fear of the obvious eventuality of a Russian victory accompanied by a simultaneous defeat of France.

6.

More difficult and closer to the German is the question of whether German policy in the event of a victory had a sustainable solution to offer the world, and which.

One cannot speak of a unified policy of the German Empire in this war. Policy was without interruption a twofold one, fighting and thwarting itself, and this twofold policy was none and had no solution. It must be asked what would have occurred if the one or the other had been able to work itself out purely and rely upon a military victory. First as to the first, the solution of the majority of the General Staff and its followers. These followers — that is, those circles which, protected and supported by the military side, established and consolidated the political power of the military leadership and in its sense and commission fought, thwarted, and finally forced the political leadership under their will — represented their demands publicly, recognized and demanded complete victory as a prerequisite for their realizability. The details are known. They do not coincide in everything, but on the whole and in the general direction of spirit with the conditions of a peace settlement conveyed orally and in writing to the respective Imperial Chancellors by the most celebrated military leaders on land and water.

This German military party wanted the same thing that French and English policy pursued in their way during the whole war and finally executed. The European may accuse; English and French democracy must concede to a German military party the right to a policy of force [*Gewaltpolitik*] of which it itself has become guilty, and an end is made to all hypocrisy by a comparison of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk with that of Versailles.

In this solution no European, not even a German of sober and real-political insight, could see anything that could have endured. It was to be achieved exclusively through force [*Gewalt*] and retained only through force. If in the West it wanted to hold the Flemish coast as a maritime position against England, keep Belgium militarily and economically dependent, incorporate the ore basin of Briey into Germany, and in the East rule the Russian border

territories from Estonia to Romania, then this solution, executed and administered in the spirit that these circles demonstrated, professed, and propagated, could have been maintained not only against the whole world with permanent force of arms, but also against the affected nations only through the suppression of ever new uprisings, thus through the dictatorship of an army of occupation [*Besatzungsheer*]. Doubt is not permitted on this matter even for those with defective insight into European conditions and a short memory for the history of these plans and their methods.

These plans, designed indeed with the passion of the mind at that time, but without a sense of reality, were opposed by the political leadership of the German Empire in the first three years of the war. It considered the possibility of a comprehensive victory overthrowing all opponents, which these plans presupposed, as not realistically given. But that was probably not the only and also not the essential reason here why it attempted to combat these plans for the exploitation of such a victory and the spirit in which they were designed. It considered these plans not only unachievable for now, but also permanently untenable, and therefore this spirit not only as soaring beyond real possibilities, but also as fundamentally misguided.

Hence the conflict between political and military leadership, to which very soon an ever-widening rift in the people itself corresponded, was not merely a divergent tactical opinion, but an opposition of political direction of spirit, and here arose its unavoidability and its irreconcilability slipping away from every compromise again and again. The one German people was split into two peoples of different spirit. The rift widened. The extremes, supporting and justifying each other, clouded and falsified every insight and deliberation. The intoxication of force [*Gewaltrausch*] of the one pushed the others into sentimentality [*Gefühlsduselei*]; the sentimentality of the one nourished and sharpened the intoxication of force of the other. Political prudence [*politische Klugheit*], which has nothing to do with

either, covered its head, powerless in the midst of passions.

Herr von Bethmann Hollweg was as a German a European. Not only out of inclination and education, but out of the highly concrete political insight that the interest and prosperity of Europe is and signifies the interest and prosperity of Germany. This parallelism of German and European interest, grounded in the geographical position of the German Empire, threatened above all others and most strongly affected by every European unrest and insecurity, grounded also in the natural limitation of its political possibilities, was expressed in a government declaration on the hundredth birthday of Prince Bismarck and answered by nationalist opponents with attacks on the "cosmopolitan" Imperial Chancellor; it was not a matter of Europe, which is Hecuba to us, but of Germany. It was a matter of both. That European suffering is Germany's suffering is shown by the present; that Germany's suffering becomes and remains Europe's suffering is shown all the more forcefully to those who still do not want to admit it today by the future.

If this disposition had been confronted with a military victory and the possibility of working itself out purely in its exploitation, it would have had to limit itself to the stabilization of a Central European Confederation [*mitteleuropäischer Bund*], which to be sure could as little dispense with a strong display of power as with a sense for the interests and feelings of its weaker members. A strong, but spiritually calm Germany as an advocate of European interests, understanding its own advantage broadly, and not sickening its power through the stupid gesture — here lured goals, more powerful and for a political people despite everything more real than the Flemish coast.

This policy failed and had to fail. Such a narrow path between external and internal passions could perhaps have been led by a genius, leading a politically mature, spiritually united people not intoxicated by the gesture of force. The capacity of the German people for such a policy could have

been tested in the tasks of occupation in the West and East, which were to be sure complicated by the enemy blockade. But already here its unavoidable fate becomes apparent. Good intention and objective performance negated by the total absence of any psychological sense, pride of power [*Machtdünkel*] that dispenses with sympathy, sentimentality and sudden anger [*Jähzorn*], the intentions of policy consciously and unconsciously thwarted by military execution: both, force and love, always in the wrong place and in everything political a total failure.

We stand here before the following result, which is also instructive for the tragedy of the present state of the world: an insight rare in the time back then sees through the questionability of a German solution of force, sees through also the danger of that degeneration of states into mechanisms that became increasingly incapable of free rational decision, but must acknowledge that even that path of reason which it had to walk in the event of victory could hardly have been wrested from the hatred of opponents as well as from one's own hubris [*Hybris*], must bend at every step it takes, in order not to surrender the state completely to the blind politicians of force, to fatal halfness [*fatale Halbheit*], and fails after three years of a lonely struggle, perhaps inadequate in technical details and yet not lacking in tragedy, against the alliance of blind passions that have grown up in the military leaders on the one hand, in the preponderance of the mechanisms of public opinion on the other.

7.

French policy has no other solution to the European question than that which it attempted to realize in the Paris negotiations: the weakening of the German Empire to the point of destruction and shattering [*Zertrümmerung*]. To be strong among weak neighbors is the ultimate conclusion of a simple wisdom. The political world of thought from which this policy springs is rooted in the past, but points to no future.

The victors, that is the Allied and Associated Powers, possessed in no stage

of the war in their entirety a conception of a reorganization of European conditions or anything that deserved the name of a draft from one spirit. What they possessed was only a catalog of war aims put together in the various stages from the blind needs and momentary contingencies of the situation, a catalog forced to register all those promises that had been made from 1914 to 1919 to any open or quiet ally for war purposes. These promises, made to Poles, Czechs, South Slavs, Italians, Romanians, Serbs, Armenians, Arabs, on the whole a hodgepodge [*Sammelsurium*] of contradictions, untenabilities, and new causes of conflict, were made by those promising for the sake of momentary need, but not in the idea that an absolute victory could ever make them presentable for complete redemption.

Victory met the Allied and Associated Powers *de facto* unprepared and bound by a series of unthought-out and confusing pledges: it took no less than half a year until agreement was reached at least among themselves on the program to be slipped over the vanquished, at least as far as Germany and German-Austria came into question. The matters of the Balkans and the Near East are today, a year and a half after the conclusion of the armistice, still completely unregulated. This loss of precious time — a gruesome testimony of helplessness — has sharpened the European crisis by a multiple. While the physicians of the European hospital attempted to agree, a part of the patients has half rotted or fallen into chronic lingering sickness.

But even more unfruitful than the loss of time is the work itself, born sick and weak out of senile hatred. As a political subject capable of a unified setting of goals, the Allied and Associated Powers after their actions simply cannot be regarded. The treaty is in the first place the work of France, of the strongest hatred and the greatest continental interests. The ultimate goals of French hatred are to be sure dampened, hindered, and forced onto detours by the necessity of occasionally mitigating the pangs of conscience

of the President of the United States bound to the appearance of his 14 Points — hence the policy of force, draped here and there with a hypocrisy that does not mitigate cynical attitude, but increases it.

The financial and economic sense of the treaty with Germany is the ruin of German economic life. That was on the part of France the intention and is the effect. While the German people itself does not yet seem to know the extent of its plundering and impoverishment — wherein understandable psychological inclinations mix with the beguiling effects of paper money economy —, the representative of the English Treasury at the Paris Conference, J. M. Keynes, has exposed to the world in an honest book the cruel nonsense, the absurd origin, as well as the unavoidable consequences of the economic provisions of the treaty. If the authors of these provisions should realize their unfulfillability and justify the treaty by claiming that they do not insist on a literal execution, they condemn the treaty: treaties are supposed to be reliable foundations for the coexistence of nations, are supposed to give the economic politician as well as the merchant the possibility to calculate and work relatively securely. This work, however, surrenders even the future labor of a whole people at best to a foreign mercy fluctuating according to manifold motives, which awakens hopes and disappoints them again and smothers every systematic work in uncertainty. Even the eventual attempt to justify the frequently lethal work through a mitigation must fail: the Germans will hardly thank the merciful victor who remits one of five types of death for them.

The territorial sense is the greatest possible reduction of the German nation-state, the fragmentation [*Zersplitterung*] of the German national community [*Volksgemeinschaft*], through the severing of parts of Germandom in the North, East, and at the Belgian border, through the assignment of three million German-Bohemians to Czechoslovakia, through the prohibition of the annexation [*Anschluß*] of German-Austria, the creation of as many friction surfaces and enmity as possible around

Germany, and to top all this, as the sense of the occupation of the left-bank Rhine territories, the striving to force their separation, not achieved in peace, through the pressure of occupation.

The military provisions serve the same total purpose. Germany must be disarmed, must become completely defenseless. While Germany is supposed to disarm, the new state formations on its eastern border are artificially equipped into military powers under French aid and leadership with old war material and new branches of the French armament industry. Creusot buys the Skoda works and establishes branches in Warsaw. France borrows what it can always borrow in its own weakness, but as before the war to Russia, with the condition of application for armament purposes.

The treaties with German-Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey are children of the same spirit. Their economic sense is plundering. That neither German-Austria nor Hungary can live economically, Paris too knows. The treaty-bound plundering is further supplemented by the private one. One buys up whatever one can still use, factories, forests, mines, and antiques, and leaves the unusable remnant to decay. The unfortunate countries slow down for a little while through the meager results of this sell-out the dying off of the surplus population, only to let the remainder of their human beings languish all the more thoroughly impoverished in a completely primitive agrarian economy. Neutral, Allied, and Associated relief committees, of good will, appease the world conscience and take care that the Viennese children do not have to die their death of hunger already in the first years of life.

The territorial sense of the treaties is, partly from intention, partly from inability, total disorganization [*völlige Desorganisation*]. It was easier to divide the body of the Austro-Hungarian state than now to keep the twitching parts alive. The former Austro-Hungarian state united bad and well lands and nations that can live neither with one another nor without one another. It did not develop them particularly, but nevertheless

organized their mutual bickering with a great traditional routine in here and there cheerful, but always tolerable forms, and thus did not clog a source of eternal unrest and conflicts, but let it splash along in a passably regulated bed. Sooner or later, to be sure, even in peaceful development the Viennese arts would have arrived at their limit. Not considering that the word of Disraeli of Turkey, which one would have to invent if it did not exist, applies all the more to Austria-Hungary, the leaders of the Entente, instead of imposing upon the old state a federative reconstruction, or at least the retention of economic unity, smashed the whole structure, then, probably in insight into the incapability of the majority of its parts to live, played with the thought of a Danube Confederation [*Donauföderation*] and, themselves disunited, proved incapable of reuniting what was disunited.

Thus the national states are there. The one group, German-Austria and Hungary, the enemies of the victors, cut down from all sides to the point of inability to live; the other group, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, expanded as allies beyond their capacity of performance, each endowed with minorities of foreign race and language, pieced together in part from disparate parts, all burdened with the hatred and enmity of all neighbors. Whoever can arm, arms; general uncertainty is even more paralyzing than once were the methods of government of the Dual Monarchy, and what the Allied and Associated Powers call peace is nothing but latent war. To Czechoslovakia 3½ million Germans, to Yugoslavia and Romania no fewer than 3½ million pure Hungarians are assigned. Yugoslavia has in the Banat, in the Bačka and Baranya a majority of Germans, Romanians, and Hungarians, in Southern Styria and Carinthia large German language areas, in Dalmatia it has Italian fragments, and in the South will receive closed, purely Albanian territories. On top of all this, no one yet knows whether the three leading nationalities of this national state, the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, really form one nation. It began with centralism, but already today autonomists and federalists are in the upper

hand. Perhaps here as in Czechoslovakia, instead of the large Austria, a small Austria must be formed.

Thus Southeastern Europe up to the German border is balkanized. The same has happened with Northeastern Europe, where Poland and Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia lurk at each other hostiley and on top of that a nebulous White Russia is supposed to arise. The policy that is conducted there is, despite the League of Nations and membership in it, a completely Balkan one. Uprisings, assassinations, small military coups and occupations, war armament and eternal threat, ephemeral alliances, shifting constellations, and in all this the victorious Great Powers, in secret, but each for itself and active against the influence of the other. Thus a total disorganization, paralyzing every upswing, consuming the still existing goods, and forced to consume itself in shifting wars.

Not satisfied with this result, French policy wants to balkanize Germany as well, split off the Rhineland, separate South and North. France, clinging with a tenacity without equal to the political ideas of hegemony that it was able to exercise in the 17th and 18th centuries over a fragmented Europe, wants to bring back this 17th and 18th century, although its return brings death to the meanwhile industrialized Europe. Extra-politically it has never advanced beyond the traditions of these centuries; even the most terrible catastrophe has not allowed new political thoughts to arise, indeed hardly taught to understand them.

This French solution to the European question is negative, not positive, destructive and not constructive. For no other nation is the total European idea [*europäische Gesamtgedanke*] so difficult to grasp, national passion so inaccessible to control by reason. The struggle that the French will to rule [*französische Herrschaftswille*] conducted before the war against the lessons of a declining birth rate and declining economic power could be called heroic, the disproportion between the capacity to rule and the will to rule tragic. Both may today, when a victory of never hoped-for magnitude has

hit the victorious country almost to death, be doubly heroic and doubly tragic as the spectacle of a struggle against fate. France has for the policy it conducts neither the human beings nor the economic and financial resources. It manages with difficulty to cope practically with the Alsace-Lorraine problem and would have to fail both at the violent rule over the Rhineland and at its peaceful penetration. For both, in the long run, more is required than soldiers, and this more is lacking.

The political rule over a fragmented Germany, the hegemony over Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Balkans, claims to the old French paramount position over Turkey, and on top of all this the rule over a gigantic colonial empire — all that with a nation of rentiers [*Rentnervolk*], whose national passion in the long run can conceal neither the lacking sense of reality nor the gaps in economic and organizational power. These tasks France cannot objectively solve; it feels itself economically too weak and is out of the feeling of this weakness too distrustful to dare, under its system of hegemony, to let the European nations work together in common labor, each peacefully for its part, and prosper; it will endeavor again and again to keep the wounds open everywhere, to keep the neighbor weak not only militarily but also in every other respect, will replace the missing capacity of organization through the art of disorganization, rule with destructive means, not with constructive ones — thus, practically speaking, support the Independents in Germany, and in Poland that ultra-nationalism which, despite the clear insight of all that without a working together with the German neighbor Poland cannot prosper, knows in relation to Germany only unproductive hatred and sabotaging chicane [*sabotierende Schikane*]. France will perhaps be capable, according to the teachings of Richelieu and Talleyrand, of carrying out this policy for a considerable time with the means of old diplomacy and the new arts of newspaper demagogy, perhaps also sacrifice piece by piece its Syrian and some of its African positions as compensations to England for the external maintenance of these claims;

one day, however, the whole system will collapse from its untenable nature, and the ruins of Europe will bury proud, irrational, dreamful France beneath them as well.

The European state of affairs, untenable before the war, has become a hundred times more untenable through war and peace. At that time, a magnificent but thoughtless prosperity threatened to be swallowed by a world war, failing one day because of the instability of the European balance of power. It was the common interest of the European nations to avoid this world war. Lack of insight into this commonality, lack of a cold political leadership surveying the common danger and independent of demagogues allowed it to break out. The war is over: it has shattered every single one of the nations of the European continent, disorganized the whole to the utmost extreme. The nations of Europe, individually or together, in their present state incapable of even living, let alone healing the wounds of the war, are placed before the choice of finding new paths and stepping upon them with decisiveness, or perishing completely.

II

1. This crisis of the political organization of the world [*Krise der politischen Organisation der Welt*], not eliminated by the Treaty of Versailles [*Vertrag von Versailles*], but sharpened, is only one side of the great world crisis [*Weltkrise*] of the present. But it is in origin and effect most closely concatenated [*verkettet*] with a second, and this again with a third. The second is an inner crisis of states and forms of state [*innere Krise der Staaten und Staatsformen*], which, having strayed everywhere from their ideal purpose due to intricate, hard-to-treat, and commonly unrecognized causes, seem capable of acting not according to a total plan of quiet reason [*Gesamtplan ruhiger Vernunft*], but according to accidental secondary considerations [*zufällige Nebenrücksichten*] and secondary

influences [*Nebeneinflüsse*]. The third, the crisis of society [*Krise der Gesellschaft*], appearing in the train of the first two, has seized and consumed the East of Europe, Russia, in the form of Bolshevism [*Bolschewismus*]. In their history of origin as in their further development, the three crises interlock in constant reciprocal interaction [*Wechselwirkung*]. All three together encompass the whole organization of the human race [*Organisation des Menschengeschlectes*] and in their interlocking form a world event [*Weltgeschehen*] that will perhaps divide the ages more deeply than the Migration of Peoples [*Völkerwanderung*], than the discovery of America. The crisis of the organization of the world would not have broken out in this terribleness or, if it had broken out, would not have progressed into such incurability if it were not in constant reciprocal interaction, causing and being caused, most closely concatenated with a crisis of states that seem intent on refuting themselves. By the crisis of states I do not understand the revolutions that have broken out in individual ones of these states, but the disproportion revealed in all states between the conduct [*Gebaren*] of states and the state purpose [*Staatszweck*], between a certain inner necessity [*innere Zwangsläufigkeit*] and the demands of reason [*Forderungen der Vernunft*]. The states seem through the development of their inner nature to have become incapable of mastering their proper tasks — their actions are result and consequence, not deliberation and goal [*Ergebnis und Folge, nicht Überlegung und Ziel*]. I am aware that this assertion will be contested, this crisis denied. As familiar and obvious as the causes and facts of that crisis of the political organization of the world are, so unrecognized and still veiled are the causes of the irrational conduct [*vernunftwidriges Gebaren*] of states, which is mostly attributed to the error of individual personalities and parties, but not to a general aberration [*allgemeine Verirrung*] of the states themselves. That the vanquished would have done better to end the war, if possible earlier, if necessary also with sacrifices, will

not be contested. That the victors too, if they wanted or were able to satisfy reason, would have had to seek and find an earlier end, can, in view of the sacrifices, the shift of political and economic power relations [*Verschiebung der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Machtverhältnisse*] in favor of the neutrals and individual less affected war participants, in view also of the dangers that were narrowly escaped, properly be asserted. The question that is to be asked reads: What prevented the individual ones from following the command of reason [*Gebot der Vernunft*] and their own interest? **2.** It is subject to no doubt that Russian policy during the war could have had in moments of favorable situation an advantageous peace, and in the long period of its ever-sharpening defeat a peace without sacrifices. The Russian statesmen of all cabinets from August 1914 to November 1917 had to know that and knew it. German policy has hardly concealed its readiness for such a peace publicly, and only so far as political consideration for the effect of a German offer—which would not have increased, but decreased the psychological possibility of a separate peace [*Separatfrieden*]—required this; but confidentially, directly and indirectly, it made this known to every Russian politician of weight at every offered opportunity. And this not out of special predilection for Russia, but for the simple reason because in Germany, peering for a favorable peace possibility [*günstige Friedensmöglichkeit*], such a peace was hoped for time and again precisely in the East with the Russian autocracy, which extra-politically after its defeat was distracted from Pan-Slavism [*Panslawismus*]. Russia did not fail to perceive these possibilities because it was an autocracy [*Autokratie*]. The Russian statesmen and probably also the powerful ones of the court could, in recognition of the situation and the rising inner and outer dangers, at least have concluded peace if the free mobility of action [*freie Beweglichkeit des Handelns*] had remained to them. But to the Russian government too this freedom of movement [*Bewegungsfreiheit*] was taken away by an alliance—arisen and active

already before the war and developed unrestrainedly in the war—of the Pan-Slavic association machine [*panslawistische Vereinsmaschine*], of industrial committees and newspapers, held together and led by the Western allies and their money. In the heyday of Russian war enthusiasm, with the help and tolerance of the Russian government, a powerful mechanism [*mächtiger Mechanismus*] had been created out of all these powers, economic interests, and corruption interests [*Wirtschafts- und Korruptionsinteressen*] standing alongside and outside the state, in whose fetters the freedom of movement and the self-will [*Eigenwille*] of the Russian state in foreign policy then suffocated. A tremendous propaganda laid itself like dense fog over the land, and a completely blinded people, proud of its loyalty and sentimentally excited, went into ruin. A coming science that will finally turn to the psychology of the masses [*Psychologie der Massen*] finds in the methods and history of this blinding a instructive tragedy; the Russian people finally believes that the German merchant economically subjugated and sucked dry Russia, that the German soldier—as newspapers and films say and hired wounded men must tell before assemblies—gouges out the eyes and tears out the tongue of prisoners, that even the thought of peace as a treason against allies eternally shames the Russian name, sees in the growing longing for peace [*Friedenssehnsucht*] a secret sin — a general atmosphere in which every single stir of reason of the responsible leaders of state must hide and suffocate in concealment. Russia no longer acts and thinks. When finally, in the first months of the year 1917, the leading men seem to seek the way to peace that the people silently longs for, the whole structure of the existing regime collapses because that machinery, in order to prevent the allegedly threatening separate peace, alliances itself, driven by the Allies, with the revolutionary movement. And just as the old regime could probably still have held itself for a while if it had sought and taken peace in time, so Kerensky and the Duma could have maintained themselves and avoided the second

revolution if they had brought peace to the land with the overthrow. The people wanted peace; the men at the head of the new government also had to take account of this in their programmatic declarations and demanded it according to the principles of the socialist program; from Germany came publicly the agreeing answer, but once again that machinery of committees and newspapers, put together out of foreign, political, and Russian private interests, succeeded in imposing upon leaders and led, in place of the simple insight that only peace can save the land and the revolution, the delusion [*Irrwahn*] that the new freedom could double the powers of the state and its economy and only through it had victory become possible — thus Russia staggers, fettered in sentimental shame to the allies, from one phantom hope into the other and finally into the abyss of complete self-destruction — in place of statesmen as well as the popular will [*Volkswille*], that machinery has become decisive and acting. It subdues the will of statesmen and violates the will of the people in an unexampled overstretching of things and moods, until the general catastrophe buries this machinery as well, and the ruin of Russian industry and the departure of the allied diplomats concludes the tragedy. **3.** For Germans, this degeneration of the state and of statesmen [*Entartung des Staates und der Staatsmänner*], although a general phenomenon of the age, may become clear from the history of their own state, which to be sure is in Germany itself in many ways obscured. German policy could have avoided, if not a world war altogether, then certainly this one. To be sure, in the years 1890 to 1908 it would have had to refrain from seeking successes in the chase after prestige [*Prestige*] that brought the leaders of the state the applause of newspaper readers, favorable reaction on party politics or even on elections, or the paper halo [*papierne Gloriole*] of the moment; it should not have irritated, alarmed, or blocked the path of the three Great Powers around Germany simultaneously, more through words and the outer appearance of deeds than through any inner intention; it ought to have

directed the drive for activity [*Betätigungsdrang*] of the German people, which to be sure could not be dammed back, into a specific, politically possible direction compatible with world peace, instead of stimulating but not satisfying it aimlessly and contextlessly through the appearance of sea power, or through settlements in the Near and Far East that in the long run were untenable, the fata morgana of an empire extending from Berlin to the Persian Gulf or of a cultural center isolated on the Pacific Ocean despite the strongest fortifications. At one and the same time Constantinople was contested with the Russians, command of the sea with the British, and—in aberration from a still valid Bismarckian maxim—colonial expansion with France; and in the age of imperialism one wondered wrongly that the three powers, forgetting and postponing old oppositions, allied themselves first against the one who wanted to stand in everyone's way. This failed policy [*verfehlte Politik*] is indeed to a great extent, but not, as is commonly believed, solely the fault of the failed foreign-policy judgments and calculations of diplomats. It is the fault of failed actions and gestures, and these arose not so much from lacking insight of diplomacy as from the inclination or temptation to satisfy parties or newspapers for inner-political purposes through acts and gestures of foreign policy, even against better insight, and from a dependency of the government—arisen in this period and rapidly growing—upon a certain apparatus of associations and organizations [*Apparat von Vereinen und Organisationen*] that it may have needed and created for carrying through the defense bills. Such apparatuses and machines—as is proved not only by the history of the German Navy League [*Flottenverein*] and Defense League [*Wehrverein*], but by the history of all analogous structures in all countries—have a natural and easily explicable tendency to expand not only in members, but also in drive for activity and scope of tasks; they must be kept busy and appeased even when the special task for whose agitation they were created is solved or currently resting; once born, they are

willfully present, and only rarely do their creators get rid of the spirits they called up. The political world is full of such structures which, with the drive for life once placed into them, transform the power that created them into powerlessness by entangling it. A phenomenon of all countries and times, but in ours overgrowing the state in a never known manner and grown into a tragic fatality [*tragisches Verhängnis*]. Prince Bismarck used demagogic means after the model of Napoleon III with sovereign technique for the subjugation of parties under his will, for election purposes, or to force laws through parliament. But never did he make concessions in foreign policy to such a technique of inner policy, but used its arguments only when the foreign matter required or permitted it. His foreign policy was autonomous, conducted by him according to its own laws and requirements. He subordinated inner policy to foreign policy, but not foreign policy to inner policy. The greatest technician of those means among his successors reversed this relationship into its opposite. He subordinated foreign policy to inner policy and sacrificed the matter to the technique of self-preservation [*Technik der Selbstbehauptung*] in concessions that seemed small and objectively tolerable to him, but were nevertheless fatal for the future. He occasionally rattled the saber outwardly for inner election purposes, sought in forceful words the applause of parties he needed, and for the sake of the Boer-fondness [*Burenliebhaberei*] of German parties and newspapers let Chamberlain bite on granite at the wrong time; to keep the people busy, he sought fleeting prestige successes and even more their appearance without a long-term plan now here, now there. He cultivated that dangerous apparatus of associations and organizations and needed it for inner-political purposes; to be sure, he did not and could not satisfy their growing claims in the realm of foreign policy and occasionally had to oppose them, but then always took care to reconcile them through a mock trial [*Scheingericht*]. These mock trials characterize German policy of this time and led from success to success into a European constellation in which

the simultaneously alarmed opponents all around joined together in an overwhelming alliance against the German Empire. And yet the German people would do wrong if it wanted to attribute the blame for this development solely and exclusively to Prince Bernhard von Bülow or to the peculiarities of the Emperor, which came to the aid of this policy of the Prince—fought by him here and there, but also often used and cultivated: the German people in these decades applauded the greatest errors loudest, the statesmen swam comfortably and skillfully with the general current, and more important than the guilt of individuals is the beginning degeneration of the state [*beginnende Entartung des Staates*]. In the years from 1909 to 1914, a man with opposite disposition and talent, with opposite means, attempted the opposite policy at the head of the German state. Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, not capable of that demagogic technique, but also not subject to its temptations, wanted to free German policy from the entanglement of those well-meaning but willful associations and mechanisms and subordinate inner-political technique again to the objective interest of foreign policy. But his attempt to wriggle Germany out of the suffocating encirclement through a quiet policy that should eliminate the material of conflict piled up all around through understanding and compromise, to dismantle untenable positions of prestige and give a durable direction to the German drive for activity, failed. It is idle today to debate whether the "too late" was the decisive factor or a halfness of resolutions [*Halbheit der Entschließungen*], and whether this halfness was the fault of the leading statesman or imposed upon him by the distribution of real power in the state and public opinion. The same newspapers and persons who fought the then Imperial Chancellor before the war for the sake of this attempt and narrowed his power through such fighting accuse him today of weakness because this attempt—undertaken against the general stream—failed due to insufficient emphasis [*unzureichender Nachdruck*]. I do not hesitate to see in this cheap

accusation only a further sign of the personal impoverishment [*persönliche Verelendung*] of the age. But those too for whom the convenient addiction to seek the fault for all misfortune in the errors and weaknesses of individuals has let belief in this insufficient emphasis become a fixed conviction acknowledge thereby the force of the resistances that opposed a pure effect of a policy of reason. And when statesmen are less and less able to wring reason from growing resistances, require an increasing measure of technique and strength and finally a surplus of human capacity, that too is a degeneration of the state whose cause must not be placed upon the miracle of genius. If at all, German policy after 1909 could only have avoided the World War if it had executed a radical retreat, whether toward the Russian or toward the English side, renounced the fleet, or before the First Balkan War released Constantinople and their Balkan claims to the Russians: where is the presumptuous one who dares to assert that such a policy could have been wrung from parliaments, parties, associations, and the entirety of their machinery, from a people that accused every one of its statesmen of weakness and applauded the uniformed demagogue as a hero? Not only these, but much smaller backward movements were unexecutable. There was no political official of the German Empire who had ever set his foot on the soil of East Asia and who would not have considered, if not the return of the Tsingtao outpost to China, then at least its defortification as desirable and wise; but also none even moderately familiar with the alignment of power relations in Germany who would have regarded such a retreat as enforceable against storms of indignation. In the most critical situation, the leader of the Conservatives before the 1912 elections, pointing to England, thundered his "There stands the enemy" against a government that saw the only way out in an understanding with England, and the words with which the Imperial Chancellor countered him apply to this as to countless other cases. Always the same spectacle: the will to reason [*Wille zur Vernunft*] overgrown,

entangled, obstructed a thousandfold by those fatal mechanisms of opinion-making [*Mechanismen der Meinungsmache*], and let no one believe he says anything essential when he blames an individual, Tirpitz or the Emperor, Bassermann, Heydebrand, or whoever else. Those mechanisms, once to be sure created by human beings according to the secret inclinations of the time, but since then present according to their own laws and will, now create human beings for themselves: hunger for power and ambition offer themselves to them, the name matters nothing to the case, and the machine stamps representative marionettes into leaders of heroic greatness. The war accelerated the tempo of this degeneration. Before the war it was the political special-purpose associations [*politische Zweckvereine*] arising here and there, slowly growing, that forced their own will upon the parties that needed them for election purposes, founded and bought newspapers, and attempted to guide the hand of the state and its government. The decisive step occurs when the great economic powers, politicizing themselves more and more, ally themselves with this apparatus and find a taste for its methods. That happens in Germany later than in the other modern Great Powers. This development, already a fatality before the war, became so completely in the war and brought with its direct and indirect effects the collapse of the state [*Zerfall des Staates*]. The revolution cannot flatter itself with having inhibited or even slowed down this process. It accelerated it because it further shattered the tradition of objectivity [*Tradition der Sachlichkeit*] still living in the civil service and working against it, without being able to create to this day a new counterweight in a unified state-mindedness [*Staatsgesinnung*] of the people. Deeper than the external form of state, this development continues straight ahead through its transformation. Today semi-free governments stagger between Legien and Stinnes, frequently changing, along an uncertain path. **4.** The Russian and German examples may suffice. The individual Frenchman too knows today that a premature peace of

understanding would have been better than the most brilliant victory. Italy too knows that in neutrality the country could foreign-politically have harvested the essential part of what victory brought, and economically, instead of impoverishment and disruption, wealth and prosperity. But neither was France free to conclude peace, nor Italy capable of remaining neutral. In both states state reason [*Staatsvernunft*] had been overwhelmed, entangled, fettered from within. To England and the United States the war has brought tremendous advantages, to be sure not yet secured against the repercussion of the catastrophes of the rest of the world. But as little as the gambler can attribute a gain to his cleverness, can England claim that a course of war in which Germany wins over Russia and is then beaten in the West was reasonably to be hoped for. A Russian victory, however, was more dangerous for the World Empire than a German one. For the United States this war was only a colonial war, and moreover a policy of active neutrality could with lesser sacrifices have brought politically and economically the same or greater gain. The entry of the United States into the war was also no free decision of reason [*freier Vernunftentschluß*], but was finally forced by an alliance of German blunders, American private interests, and English propaganda. The inhabitants of the German trenches on the Western Front were able to see from the war book of Henri Barbusse that the fate and psychology of the enemy over there is equal to one's own in all human aspects, and over there as well as over here contempt for death, fear, wit, coarseness, comradeship, modesty and bragging, food, tobacco, and clothing worries, filth, and homesickness are mixed into the same picture of eternal humanity. The states too resemble one another more than they believe. Wrongly have the newspapers of the Entente outlawed Prussian militarism [*preußischer Militarismus*], and with no greater right has the German submarine press condemned Lord Northcliffe and the "Matin" or the methods with which the street in Rome or Bucharest drove a still half-unwilling people into the war.

The investigation of the development of states yields everywhere the same picture. Of the same disease the ones have perished, others have become infirm, for others the gift of God of an improbable victory may help overcome severe disease: the external form of appearance is different, the essence the same: monarchies like democracies are equally degenerate. Certainly, states have accomplished tremendous things — wrung an exertion of strength and a technical-organizational achievement [*technisch-organisatorische Leistung*] from their peoples whose possibility before the war the boldest phantasist did not suspect — unheard-of human sacrifices they have brought to themselves for the sake of this achievement; but neither the victor nor the vanquished has, when sacrifice, gain, and danger are weighed, been guided by reason. Everything through the state and everything for the sake of the state, the spectacle of a tremendous achievement — but this end in itself [*Selbstzweck*] and this achievement generating against itself, indeed ultimately destroying itself. This tragedy of the state [*Tragik des Staates*], which the war revealed but has not ended, is more deeply grounded and harder to cure than the believer in habit presumes. This inner fatality of states, like the outer one, was also not eliminated by the war. As it made the preservation of peace difficult before the war and prevented its conclusion during the war, so after the war it contributed to spoiling the peace and prevents after the peace the return to reason. It sucks from its own effects ever new strength as evil that continuously generating must bear evil. The new weak states, to be kept above water only through ever newly whipped-up nationalism, are doubly exposed to it; old states have been brought by defeat to the brink of a despair that is no friend of reason. They stagger gropingly between extremes, dependent on every chance, sick, incapable of long-term plans, and resisting every firm, quiet leadership. Of the victors, the most important one for the European continent, France, has through the intoxication of victory, inherited dreams and claims, and the oppressiveness

and fears arising out of actual but frantically veiled weakness—and yet not to be banished—been completely deprived of the capacity for real judgment and quiet action. English and American collaborators of the inter-allied peace negotiations have, indignant and disgusted, reported too much from behind the scenes of the Paris work for any of the allied statesmen today to be able to assert that rational consideration or any constructive thought dictated the Peace of Versailles. The promises given by the victorious Western powers to their peoples, the compulsion not to become unfaithful to former election slogans, the frantic attempt to distract through mock trials [*Schaugerichte*] of revenge and punishment their own peoples from inner questions and to drown out the question of their own share of guilt in the war and its prolongation, mass suggestions of hatred created and cultivated with all art for war purposes during long years, grown into invincible powers — partly as unwilling prisoners of all these dependencies, partly as voluntary and unconscious marionettes, the statesmen of the Entente brewed together in the great cooking pot of compromises the most thoughtless of all treaties ever concluded out of pure contradictions. One takes from Germany coal, machines, colonies, ships, foreign trade, and property, and then demands that the land robbed through war, blockade, armistice, and peace pay the disability pensions [*Invalidenrenten*] of the whole world. All that wrapped in a League of Nations [*Völkerbund*] that is supposed to guarantee a lasting peace, but must collapse at the inner untenability of this peace, for whose protection it is abused. I do not believe that Georges Clemenceau would have been receptive to the rational consideration that a durable peace with less harsh conditions would be the wiser calculation for France as well. But even if that were so, or if in Clemenceau's place a more insightful and far-sighted spirit had stood — the hatred of the people, the parties and slogans, the impossibility of robbing the French people of the illusion would have forced anyone else on the whole into the paths that Clemenceau walked.

Reason, even if it came to power, would in France be bound hand and foot a thousandfold, entangled in the network of old and new lies, slogans, considerations, dependencies, and parliamentary ambitions [*Kammerambitionen*]. As little as Lloyd George knows Europe, the inner contradictions of the treaty cannot have escaped him. But he too was the prisoner of the *man in the street* fed with slogans, the slave of promises with which he had conducted the election campaign in November 1918. And even more so the small states: neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia would have been in a position to dispense with any annexation, whether for the sake of European peace or even only for the sake of their own future interest. **5.** The fatality continues to work after the peace. The allied and associated powers do not get forward with the still pending peace conclusions. Today, 20 months after the armistice, neither the Hungarian nor the Balkan question nor the Turkish nor any question at all is solved. On the other hand, an infinity of new ones have been created. Austria dies, to the shame of the Entente. It sees well that the Treaty of St. Germain [*Vertrag von St. Germain*] is senselessly cruel and criminally stupid, but is able to do nothing else than deceive the world conscience through charitable gifts and child-saving. Czechia seems to suffer from the artificial connection with Slovakia — but neither the Czechs nor the Paris creators of this connection are able to draw conclusions from the beginning insight, and must leave the solution, which they could seek consciously and peacefully, to future conflicts. The Polish state, threatened by severe social disease, must stun itself in militaristic pleasures, whip up a chauvinism as a state-preserving principle ever anew, must build branches of the French armament industry and take over old cannons, but is able to do nothing else than produce ever new notes and spend these for nothing other than military purposes. Upon all rests secretly the care of how this shall end, but no one can dare to speak publicly of it. France, too weak for productive support and organizational promotion, sees already in the insight

germinating here and there in Poland that one must find oneself together peacefully as neighbors with Germany for common economic work a danger, and fans Polish-German enmity. France knows that a Germany that loses Upper Silesia [*Oberschlesien*] will not only not now, but in no future be able to pay even a fraction of the sums that France expects and needs. And yet it does everything to favor an acquisition of Upper Silesia by Poland, forced for the sake of maintaining a faulty policy to make ever new errors, dependent on its own work. In Poland itself things roll off with necessity. The succeeding cabinets resemble one another in inner lack of freedom, and even the most insightful could only be a marionette before he had in years of effort created for himself, say out of newspaper and bank purchases, interest groups, and party foundations, a machinery strong enough not to break the blind necessity of opinions, but yet slowly to bend it. But even if that succeeded artificially, what effort, what heaviness of political action! With such fetterings of reason Europe cannot be brought into order. The history to date of the execution of the inexecutable Versailles Treaty also provides examples enough. How much unrest and insecurity could not have been avoided if France had wanted to settle the extradition demand [*Auslieferungsforderung*] in good time amicably with Germany, whose unfulfillability its leading men already had to see and did see in the summer of 1919. Because the French government did not dare to be rational, French policy, yielding to the pressure of the Allies, brought upon itself a defeat and let the hated, spiritually and physically broken opponent reluctantly make the astonishing experience that for once even the No of the weak is able to break through. In addition, France in this question also aroused world opinion against itself and thus acted in a threefold respect against its own interest. The French statesmen excused their cruelty outwardly and their clumsiness inwardly in this case too with the reference—characteristic for the political conditions of our time—to the compulsion of public opinion [*Zwang der öffentlichen Meinung*]. French

policy would hardly have answered the police action of Germany in the Ruhr region [*Ruhrrevier*] in the Easter days of this year with an invasion into the Main district [*Maingau*], hard to justify before the Allies and world opinion, if Mr. Millerand in free resolution had been able to give a hearing to no other interests than the foreign-policy interests of France. But as it was, in the parliamentary situation at that time he feared giving the opponents of the cabinet the hoped-for opportunity for a success and seeing Mr. Barthou, supported by Marshal Foch, arise as victor over his insufficiently "national" cabinet. Similar examples the history of all lands offers day by day. **6.** There is no period of world history in which reason could have boasted of complete freedom of movement. Political action was always a compromise between wanting and being able to, duty and being [*Wollen und Können, Sollen und Sein*]. But degrees and forms of this lack of freedom distinguish the ages. To ours the necessity of the political course [*Zwangslaüfigkeit des politischen Ablaufs*] seems to become a fatality. The state is the body of the nation. It enables the nation, or ought to enable it, to act uniformly with sense and understanding according to plan and intention. To find out, preserve, and secure this uniformity and planfulness of a total will acting according to the total interest [*Gesamtwille ausfindig zu machen*] is the purpose and goal of every constitution. In every moment there is danger that some partial will and special interest [*Teilwille und Sonderinteresse*] seizes the state apparatus and abuses it for special purposes that do not harmonize with the total interest. These can be corrupted individuals, a dynasty, an upper class, a class organization, or a party guided by special interests. As history shows, every safeguard against the abuse of the state is only relative and must be so, since precisely the total will and total interest of the nation is a constantly contested and questionable matter, hard to grasp and never unambiguously provable, always feeling its way only in the future. Every form of state directs itself against the dangers of the other and has its own within itself. Our age sees

parliamentarism [*Parlamentarismus*]—which arose as a protection against dynasties and upper classes degenerating into the representation of partial interests and proved itself as such—now itself threatened with falling into dependency on partial interests. Between the individual and the state, whose relationship was hitherto mediated and determined by the party representing only one political total conception, multi-branched organizations of special interests have inserted themselves as intermediate forms, all of them, whether they want to admit it or not, with the inborn tendency first to overgrow the political party, then through it the state. This development has led to a crisis of the parliamentary idea [*Krise des parlamentarischen Gedankens*] that is everywhere too obvious to be denied anywhere by anyone. The individual states seek to protect themselves through an improvement of the parliamentary method, change of electoral law, or introduction of the referendum — but nowhere has a means been discovered or attempted to find out and secure the total will and total interest in another way. To replace the political parties, in which the various total conceptions of the state interest represent themselves, with occupational representations, thus with precisely those economic special organizations that threaten to overgrow the total will of the state, would mean making the goat the gardener and letting the total will not be saved, but abdicate. Salvation could only be found in a total disposition [*Gesamtgesinnung*] of individuals which, recognizing the danger of that overgrowth of the state, forces political parties like those organizations themselves into its spell and thus frees the total will from the embrace. But however matters may stand with the hopes of the future: the ailments of the present have grown into a disease of the state [*Erkrankung des Staats*]. The various intermediate forms that have inserted themselves between the citizen and the state as bearers of partial interests organize the citizen as an interested party, seize opinion-making and its instruments, and force the political party into their spell. Thus a confused network of secondary

powers [*Nebengewalten*] has arisen, with which governments have to struggle laboriously and frequently make compromises. This overgrowth of the state falsifies the formation of a political total will, inhibits, hinders its quiet and uniform activity, and ultimately lets the state degenerate from a subject acting and willing according to plan and goal into a playground of special interests fundamentally alien to the state purpose — a development to which today only those limits are drawn that the state-mindedness and political education of a people is able to draw, but which can hardly be dealt with by institutions and laws. The state is comparable to a human being whose individual drives gain the upper hand over the will, drag the unstable one now here, now there, let him become untrue to himself and stray from his own path and interest. This disease of the state organism wrests leadership from reason, surrenders the resolutions of the state to manifold unobjective secondary influences and secondary considerations. It limits the freedom of movement, fragments the state will, and moreover mostly has a dangerous instability of governments in its train. The time of unbridled nationalism before the war, the war itself, the European condition after the war have made tremendous demands on the reason of states, their quietness and freedom of movement. That capacity did not grow with the tasks, but decreased, completed the catastrophe. The crisis of the state and the crisis of world organization have in constant reciprocal interaction promoted each other and each increased the destructive effects of the other. **7.** To the direct destructive effects of this development are added indirect ones. In almost all countries the requirements to be made of the statesman have shifted. The struggle for power in the state has assumed other forms and demands other qualities and talents. Constructive work in foreign policy requires a deep knowledge of European conditions, of foreign peoples, their history and mindset, and a high European education [*hohe europäische Bildung*]. These qualities, however, play an ever smaller role in the struggle for the attainment of power in most states. Here

it is parliamentary-tactical skill, acquired routine, or inborn talent of maneuverability and oratorical gift. All these qualities can certainly combine with the human prerequisites of a foreign policy that is constructive and not merely tactical. In the inadequacy of all human things, however, such a combination is rare and difficult. Lloyd George, in his way a man of extraordinary talent, does not know Europe and according to the testimonies of his collaborators has the most peculiar notions of non-English matters. In Wilson, finally, the professor combines with the dilettante. What could a statesman with European knowledge and constructive talent have created and saved in his place! The same qualities that are necessary to attain power are indispensable to maintain it. Since this power in most countries is endangered every moment, almost three-quarters of the energy and working capacity of statesmen are absorbed everywhere in the intricate and difficult work for their own position. If democracy is to endure, it must be honest and courageous enough to say what is, even if it seems to testify against itself. Europe stands before ruin. There is no time for everyone to hide his errors for party-tactical reasons instead of correcting them. Only for this purpose, not as a *laudator temporis acti*, do I emphasize that democracy must and will destroy itself if it cannot free the state from this entanglement of secondary influences and secondary considerations. Pre-war Europe collapsed because all continental states—and indeed monarchies just as much as democracies and most of all autocratic Russia—partly voluntarily and unconsciously, partly unwillingly and forcibly submitted themselves to demagogy, incapable in the self-created aberration of minds of recognizing the rational and doing freely and decisively what was perhaps recognized after all. The upper classes of the old state order of Europe, in the past century to be sure bearers of European education and rich in personalities of statesmanlike spirit and world experience, would not have been so easily unseated and cast aside as rotten and worn out if, having grown with the problems and

tasks of the transformed time, they had not lost the statesmanlike spirit and had preserved a tradition other than that of the most external diplomatic routine. If monarchs lay claim to selecting statesmen better and more objectively than parliaments, then they and their courts must be the center and culmination of education, insight, and knowledge. But that was over long before the war. But the accusation against the errors of monarchy does not absolve democracy from recognizing the causes of its own inadequacy and doing everything to eliminate them. Before Europe can recover, before it can be attempted to replace its disastrous disorganization through a more durable political structure, the individual countries must order their inner affairs in such a manner that their governments are enabled for objective, free work in the long run. Otherwise the best will and the greatest talent, entangled a thousandfold, languishes in the fatality that is everywhere the same. **8.** This fatality, ramified over all countries, multiplies itself through the interlocking of series of events [*Ineinandergreifen der Geschehensreihen*]. The multiplicity of war theaters, the diversity of factors influencing the course of war fettered the political action of European states in war. A peace inclination, germinating here or there, was held back by new hopes or new fears that seemed to arise now on this, now on that war theater, or from a turn of this or that still neutral power, from new inventions or otherwise, and were to be waited for. Hardly was this waiting at an end when a new moment from some other side shifted the aspect. A setback had been received and the hopes of the opponents newly revived, or a success achieved and one's own claims raised. Now here, now there a cabinet already wavering was soon to fall and a favorable opportunity was to be expected from new men. In every single phase of the war, indeed in every month, a multiplicity of such interlocking considerations can be pointed out for the policy of all states, which, finally smothering every stir of reason everywhere again and again in the bud, replaced planful political action with a policy of "wait and see," that is,

waiting for and accepting the fatal course. This tragedy of coincidences [*Tragik der Koinzidenzen*] continues to work today. The Spa Conference [*Konferenz von Spa*], which according to the opinion of some is to bring the reorganization of Europe a step forward, is postponed because an Italian ministerial crisis or the German election or the new formation of the German cabinet is still to be waited for; and before it finally takes place, new events in Russia and Turkey can shift the political interests and considerations of its main participants so much that previous plans, preparations, or agreements are revised by one or the other side or combined in a complicating or dilating manner with the solution of any Syrian, Balkan, or Russian questions. Fate is for our age no longer a power of nature [*Naturmacht*]. We can recognize it in no other form than in that of the interlocking of different series of events, which in our daily life—when a slate tile slipping from the hands of a roofer strikes a passerby dead—we call chance [*Zufall*]. The diversity of interlocking series of events, their confused entanglement, the size of the political field of action, its disorganization, as well as the general instability of state conditions, have allowed the modern form of fate to grow into a tremendous fatality of all events [*ungeheure Fatalität alles Geschehens*], which a generation—efficient and active in small matters, blindly pushed in great ones—seems hardly to recognize, let alone be able to combat effectively.

IV

1. Mankind should and must believe in progress (*Fortschritt*). Here, however, there is talk of downfall (*Untergang*) and of destiny (*Verhängnis*). We are not here to perceive and, before the perceived, supposedly inevitable, to lay our hands in our lap. History does not let itself be looked over its shoulders and ultimately proves right the living thing that, blind perhaps, but nevertheless acting, stirs its hands. Asia may believe

in a fate (*Fatum*). Europe, the impatient, passionate, never stilled, erring, but constantly striving one, does not recognize death. To recognize the disease can only mean for it to perceive the means to become healthy. With the common distress, the recognition of its causes grows everywhere. Not only among the neutrals, more or less uninvolved in the passions of the war and uninjured by its moral shocks, not only among the vanquished, whom nameless misfortune has made seeing, but even in the countries of the victors themselves, the warning voices of European reflection (*europäische Besinnung*) are increasing in number as in strength. The course of history is groping and wavering (*tastend und schwankend*). The path it is accustomed to walk leads neither straight up into the heights nor uniformly downwards. In every moment of historical life, new things are coming into being while what has grown obsolete decomposes; forces of ascent and of decay cross each other. Within the states as in the world, the bearers of the future alternate. The ones step back and to others, deservedly or undeservedly, leadership falls. The destiny of the three crises is initially and first and foremost a destiny of the European continent. The American continent and East Asia are scarcely touched. The European has to come to terms with the fact that the emphasis today no longer lies upon Europe, but upon America. The European of the continent has to acknowledge that in Europe itself the weight in almost all fields has shifted to the disadvantage of the continent and to the advantage of the English Isles. The crisis under which the continent threatens to collapse is for the United States initially only an event at a distance and is in England only a relatively light concern. The European continent is not the world. To the dark picture of the European future stands the brighter one of the English World Empire—which in rapid upswing is able to heal the wounds of the war with the fruits of victory—and the unclouded one of America at the side. The question is whether the development of the European continent will continue to take place in such catastrophic forms that even the English World Empire will

not be able to evade its direct or indirect effects, or whether England and America are not only strong and sensible enough, but also willing, to save Europe before it is too late—or if not to save it, then at least to hold back the acute catastrophe and drag along the disease, which may then perpetuate itself in gradual invalidism (*allmähliches Siechtum*) or finally end in slow, modest recovery. The possibilities are open; to estimate probabilities cannot entice him who does not share the cheap belief that history always lets the probable happen. The further matter is human work, and ultimately the element of personality (*Persönlichkeit*), which cannot be removed from history, decides after all. **2.** When the President of the United States of America arrived in Paris for the peace deliberations of the victorious powers, he appeared to suffering and hoping mankind as the bringer of a new world order (*Bringer einer neuen Weltordnung*). He seemed and was filled with the best intentions. During the war he had established excellent principles of a new world order and, at the conclusion of the armistice, had known how to commit his allies to these principles. In the great struggle, America had tipped the scales economically and militarily. His allies owed victory to him. The moral, economic, and financial weight of the United States had to enable his word and his will to succeed. The President succumbed completely (*vollkommen unterlegen*). Of his noble intentions, nothing, absolutely nothing has become reality. His famous Fourteen Points are distorted into a caricature. All the noble principles of justice, economic equality of rights, self-determination of peoples, and openness of negotiations otherwise established are horribly mocked. Diplomatic higgling (*diplomatische Schacher*) in Paris was kept as anxiously secret as ever before. Of the free self-determination of nations, the German millions severed in the East, West, and South without the right to vote, and the prohibition of annexation (*Anschlußverbot*) imposed upon German-Austria bear witness. Out of the economic equality of rights of nations, a one-sided deprivation of rights (*Entrechtung*) of the

vanquished has arisen. Occasional phraseological turns and provisions of the treaty attempt in vain to veil the nakedness of this factual situation. The annexation of Austria is not forbidden for all eternity, but submitted for later to the decision of the League of Nations; since unanimity is required for this decision of the League of Nations, however, no one is deceived by this, but the intellect of the President of the United States is mocked, whose conscience was meant to be quieted—and perhaps was quieted—by such artifices. The absurd treaty, which does not end the war but perpetuates it, pregnant with new wars, is wrapped in a Covenant of the League of Nations (*Völkerbundstatut*) which, according to the will and opinion of the President of the United States, is meant to bring and secure lasting peace, but which, according to the ulterior motives of those who accepted it modified, is meant to perpetuate the work of Versailles as a Holy Alliance (*Heilige Allianz*), practically prevent its revision, and ultimately stifle it through a completely unwieldy apparatus. The decisive paragraph is § 5, according to which the decisions of the Assembly of the League and of the Supreme Council require unanimity of the represented members of the League. This paragraph turns the entire League of Nations into a dispensable decoration. In order that a group of powers execute unanimously adopted decisions, no statute is needed. Such decisions were executed hitherto as well. If in the future they are to be bound to the official channels (*Instanzenzug*) of the League of Nations, that is not a promotion but an obstruction, a slowing down, not an acceleration. If Germany in the future wishes to pursue the revision of peace and lets itself be referred to the League of Nations, it can attempt to induce the General Assembly of the League—thus a completely unwieldy and incapacitated structure, if it should ever actually sit—to decide unanimously, according to § 19, to invite the individual members of the League to reconsider treaties that have become inapplicable, the maintenance of which could endanger world peace. If the League members in question do not want to, then the decision

concerned does not come about or is not followed. But if the members concerned want to, then neither a General Assembly nor a decision nor a League of Nations statute is needed. If Germany wishes to achieve the revision of peace by way of the League of Nations, it must first and foremost pursue and push through the revision of this League of Nations itself, transforming it from a Holy Alliance of victorious governments into an instrument of international conscience capable of action and decision—thus pursuing the elimination of § 5, the creation of a truly freely moving League leadership, and its control by a parliament that represents not the special interest of governments, but the common interest of peoples. Germany will have perished before it has achieved a relief of its situation by this circuitous and, under today's conditions, impassable detour, and the League of Nations would have fulfilled the task that Mr. Clemenceau intended for it: namely, the task of perpetuating the Peace of Versailles, strangling every possibility of revision in silence, and stupefying the world conscience in the foggy mist of humanitarian illusions (*humanitäre Scheinbarkeiten*). The President of the United States, bearer of all new hopes upon his arrival in Europe, left behind only disappointments upon his departure, probably himself most deeply disappointed. His intentions are inverted into their opposite. His noble principles, which were to found a new world order, have been made subservient to the maintenance and veiling of the old, whose dangers they were to banish. Mr. Wilson, initially upon the conclusion and execution of the armistice, let any influence over its shaping—and through it the military factor of his own power position—be wrested from his hands. He then proceeded to the negotiations on the fixing of peace conditions without any knowledge of the European machinery (*europäische Getriebe*), poorly informed and without a plan for the concrete application of his points, slowly, awkwardly, without any technique of negotiation, and succumbed almost defenselessly—always perceiving too late what was being played—to the superior arts of the allied

prime ministers playing with his clumsiness. Foreign policy is a highly concrete business and since time immemorial grants success only to the noble intention that knows how to master hard facts. The political fate of the President of the United States, who willed the good and had to create the evil, remains a warning for everyone who in noble enthusiasm forgets that hard in space the things collide (*hart im Raume sich die Sachen stoßen*). **3.** The path trodden by the President of the United States does not lead to the goal. A new world order cannot be preached by a theological mind, but can only be mastered from the factual givens and human inadequacies by a political intellect. What must happen? And how can that happen which must happen? The first prerequisite for the recovery of Europe is the change of world opinion in all countries. It must become a general European conviction that under present circumstances the great European interests are common ones, because the distress is a common one and only to be remedied in common. This conviction must strengthen into a Pan-European mindset (*paneuropäische Gesinnung*). It is beyond doubt that groups and parties of such opinion will arise among all European peoples. In some they have arisen or are in the process of arising. The compulsion of things, the practical questions rising up at all corners and ends, must drive even the reluctant to gradual reflection. But mindset alone does not suffice. It must be able to compel into its spell the governments and, what is almost more important today, the machinery overgrowing the state and still tuned to other ideas. Such a reaction of reason (*Reaktion der Vernunft*), the recognition also of the causes that have brought about the present catastrophe and up to today, instead of bettering it, have worsened it, must further enable the individual states to secure a relatively stable leadership of foreign affairs that is relatively free in its decisions. Without such a leadership, even the best mindset is only powerlessness. Every action—interrupted by changes of government at home or with one of the partners, slowed down by waiting for such changes or the feeling-around of

new ministers, dampened by the hopes excited in one, the fears awakened in the other, often choked in the bud by uncertainty—must entangle itself in unforeseeable, unmanageable side-factors.1 Only when these general prerequisites are fulfilled, when in thinking and acting the bad habits of the age begin to amend, can the great and many practical questions whose solution alone can save Europe be tackled, at least with hope of a half success. If that is to happen, the unwieldy and immobile League of Nations must be replaced by a Supreme Council of leading European men, formed of victors, vanquished, and neutrals. If this Supreme Council is to create anything, the men who belong to it—or at least the majority of the most powerful—must be filled with European spirit and willing to build up constructively, instead of hunting down small advantages from one another in all sorts of compensation businesses. This Supreme Council must reshape the political and economic structure of Europe, must remove all that is manifold and intentionally disorganizing and destructive and replace it with a systematic structure that would be able to secure the maximum degree of political quiet and economic capacity. It is under present circumstances of the time—even after a reaction of European reason against the dangers of the present condition—not to be hoped that such a reconstruction *in toto* could be planned and tackled by the European powers. Even though the tempo of the age is a rapid one, even though the untenability of the present regulation and the severe instability of internal conditions in more than one country of Europe can lead to events that compel radical measures, the politician nevertheless does well not to stray too far into the bright space of extravagant hopes. *** 1 While I read the prooflines, the daily newspaper contains reports on cabinet crises in no fewer than four countries: Germany, Italy, Poland, German-Austria. **4.** But the radical reconstruction *in toto*, as a renegotiation of all peace treaties today impassable even for the moderate victor because in its final result uncertain and not calculable, is not the only path for the vanquished

either. The peace treaties can be interpreted, supplemented, or reshaped through new special treaties that regulate anew the practical problems in the sequence in which they press forward. That is the minimum demand—not the German, but the European one. But that demand must be fulfilled, and indeed in the foreseeable future. The occupation of the Rhenish lands harms both partners. It costs useless money and absorbs human labor power. It reduces, for the sake of unproductive purposes, the sum that Germany can pay to the productive ones of reconstruction. It reduces, furthermore, through traffic obstructions, frictions, administrative complications, and chicaneries, the economic productivity of the provinces. It poisons, through black troops and militaristic brutalities, the atmosphere of the present. It sows the hatred that some future must reap. As a guarantee against a disarmed Germany, it is superfluous. But even this simple question shows the magnitude of the difficulties. There will hardly be a French cabinet in the foreseeable future that could plan and execute the evacuation of the Rhenish lands. Then a purely objective understanding (*rein sachliche Verständigung*), unclouded by any political side- and ulterior motives, must come about between Germany and France in order to make economically rational cooperation between coal, coke, iron ore (*Minette*), and steel possible again in the Lorraine-Rhenish industrial area separated by new borders. Then the German indemnity sum to the Allies must be definitively fixed, and indeed at a height that corresponds not only to the low capacity of the plundered country, but also leaves the German people the greater part of the fruits of its labor and therewith the motives to work. There is no one who can compel the German worker to work only for France. Even the attempt leads to catastrophe. The height of the sum must furthermore be so measured, the mode of payment so regulated, that the German state budget—which today must pay its own citizens in paper for delivered coal, confiscated securities, cattle, ammonia, machinery, etc.—is not forced into a paper economy (*Papierwirtschaft*), at whose end stands

again catastrophe. The payment of any sum fixed now, even taking all these factors into account, has as a further prerequisite that Upper Silesia remains with Germany. If the vote turns out in favor of Poland, the Allies will not only receive no money, but will themselves have to make considerable payments, be it to finance the emigration or an orderly dying away (*geordnetes Dahinsterben*) of the German industrial population which then will no longer be capable of surviving at all. So long as the French government does not dare to describe the true situation openly, and continues to fund new notes on imaginary payments instead of resolving upon sufficient taxes, so long as the French people do not realize that the war has consumed not only the pensions (*Renten*) of the vanquished, but also those of the victors, and only new and doubled work of all can help, the problem of indemnity will—lest the sudden unveiling of the economic ruins of Europe lead the deluded peoples to severe emotional illnesses—not be solved in the hitherto existing manner, hardly treated openly, and probably dragged out, in order thus to continue acting destructively as an element of intolerable uncertainty. Here, in place of governments, an international council must tell the peoples the truth, must beyond that place minimum demands of an orderly financial economy upon all states, without whose fulfillment no one can grant loans to another, not even against political or other special advantages. A consistent implementation of such a dictatorship of financial solidarity (*Diktatur finanzieller Solidarität*) must force states to screw back unproductive armaments, in which they exhaust themselves today, at least to the measure of their financial capacity. If here the inevitability of passions still fetters reason, it should nevertheless at least be possible to rationalize European economic life piece by piece. It is relatively simple to remove from the various peace treaties all those provisions that, without benefiting anyone, serve only to damage and chicaner the defeated. Since the war has destroyed everywhere, goods and working human beings are lacking in all places while there are

too many consuming ones, all problems of economic competition and commercial envy among the states of Europe have completely shifted. The provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were born out of the views and tendencies of the pre-war period and have today become objectively contextless. It comes down to increasing the total production of Europe so that Europe can pay its debts and with its products feed and clothe its people. Under these circumstances, reason commands not to obstruct traffic, but to promote it, to promote economic cooperation and thus raise the yield of production and reduce its costs. The European peoples all together have an interest in offering the merchant, entrepreneur, job-seeking engineer or chemist, as well as the migrant worker, fixed and calculable legal conditions. If the Polish, Ruthenian, or Slovak agricultural worker folds his hands at home instead of chopping beets in Germany, Poland and France share the damage with Germany. If the technician or chemist travels about seeking a position in his homeland while giant colonial empires are not developed for lack of human beings, or new states absorb all trained forces in military or political tasks and do not make economic progress, that is today an intolerable absurdity (*unerträglicher Widersinn*) for the total European economy. Reason would command that European states promptly come together with the plan, in common distress, to conduct their economy jointly where it is necessary—not in a theoretical giant building, but piece by piece, just as practical problems press forward, through small practical agreements, special arrangements, or where it is necessary, as in the field of payment systems, through international institutions, with only the one thought of clearing everything obstructive out of the way and creating, in equal legal foundations of free activity, in traffic, passport, and payment systems, through customs simplification and duty-free lists, at least the preconditions of rational economy. If this succeeds in one field, it will succeed in other fields as well, and since pressing distress is a common one, experience can nevertheless compel

today still blinded Europe to acknowledge that the suffering of one today is also the suffering of the other, that the path taken is the correct one and must be expanded piece by piece into a European Economic Union (*europäische Wirtschaftsunion*), which, once arisen and thriving, would have to compel the spiritual and political constitution of the age into its spell. An idea today still extravagant and yet forced upon us by distress and danger. **5.** But a Supreme Council of European reason will have difficulty reaching even this point—and doing so in time. The European powers—which undertook too late to avoid the war, ended it too late, let formal peace follow too late upon the armistice—will probably also want to replace too late this formal peace, which is only a continuation of the war, at least in the economic field with a true peace. And yet this solidarithation (*Solidarisierung*) in the economic field is easy and simple in comparison to what reason has to demand in the political field. The peace treaties of Versailles, St. Germain, and Neuilly have regulated the territorial question under the dictate of France in the sense of the greatest possible disorganization. The borders have been drawn to create friction surfaces (*Reibungsflächen*) and complicate understandings, out of the political and military-political motives of a tradition no longer tenable today, without any regard for state and economic capacity. This disorganization, out of which ever new conflicts must arise, may afford French diplomacy for a while longer the satisfaction of deciding as arbiter of Balkanized Europe over the welfare and woe of powerless neighbors and stupefying rising worries in the splendor of a hegemony over a field of ruins. If Europe is to be able to thrive economically again, then this entire destructive work would have to be rebuilt in a constructive sense, and in place of intentional disorganization a systematic organization placed, which everywhere eliminates friction surfaces, lets sources of conflict dry up, restores rational economic connections, assigns to states administrative, economic, and military tasks according to their capacity, so that the ones do not choke on a

superabundance of unemployed people and forces while the others collapse overstrained over giant tasks for which both the quantity and quality of people are lacking; then Europe would have to be debalkanized (*entbalkanisiert*) again. But the entire aspect of present political existence, the recent peace treaties of the Entente, the Polish advance into the Ukraine, the blindness or helplessness of the Entente toward the German-Austria development, shows the politician relied once and for all upon realities that the ideal demand for a Pan-European, constructive revision of the Paris peace treaties may indeed be posed, the most urgent warning shatteringly substantiated, but demand and warning can only echo unheeded, and things in the old sense inevitably roll further toward the abyss. **6.** Only a change of mind (*Sinnesänderung*) of the world, a change of will of the participating main powers can let a Supreme Council of European reason arise. The neutrals, more or less untouched by the passions of the war, relied upon the cooperation of peoples if only for the sake of their smallness, have been insightful from time immemorial, but powerless. For the vanquished, staggering along the edge of the abyss, insight is easy. The recovery of Europe is their recovery. The new states, nationalist-excited to be sure, but manifoldly entangled in the general suffering, could indeed be brought to reason through the compulsion of things themselves if one in Paris resolved to promote this development instead of preventing it. Of the victorious main powers, Italy, with the political intellect peculiar to it from time immemorial, has understood that the Pan-European interest is also its own. The decision lies with France and England. France clings to the dream of founding a hegemony upon the Balkanization of Europe, perhaps knowing, but not daring to admit to itself, that through such means of destruction it must ultimately destroy itself. Upon a change of mind of the French people there is scarcely hope. Here everything—governments, parties, generals, opinions and habits, hatred, revenge, will to rule, glory and vanity, old lies and great traditions—is

spellbound in fatality (*in Fatalität gebannt*). Here warning reason, powerless before the peripeteia (*Peripetie*), leaves the theater of passion weeping, and any hope for reversal and insight becomes presumption. Since in England the voices of reason are increasing, the hopes of the hopeless turn to it. But these voices of reason, even the most noted, the book by Keynes, differ from all continental voices. They are more the voices of spectators than of participants. European suffering is initially only a suffering of the continent; hence the English can believe that their islands do not belong to the community of fate (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) of the European continent. The internal transformations that England too may have to endure as a social and psychological consequence of the war may be deep: but they will possess neither the dangerousness of the matter nor the sharpness and bitterness of form that have shaken the continental countries. A victory over opponents and over individual allies, improbable in this extent, has brought to English policy and economy an immense gain in colonies, ships, trade advantages, and prestige, and in its wake an all-encompassing economic prosperity will easily help overcome internal struggles and worries. It is manifoldly overlooked in Germany, and may be difficult for the continental European to grasp, that the gravity of English policy lies not in Europe, but in the World Empire across the seas. The continent, especially in times of its powerlessness, is for England a question of second rank. One lets it occupy itself with itself and has free hands in the remaining parts of the earth. That is the tradition that created the rise of English power, maintained through the memory of old experiences and confirmed time and again by new ones. Even now, opportunity and temptation beckon again to exchange English support of France—spellbound in the German question—time and again for political and economic positions in other parts of the earth. Nevertheless, the hopes of the continent turn to English policy. Because it is the only one that, if it wants to help, can also help. Because it is, moreover, relatively the most

flexible and, on the basis of a great political experience of its people, more capable than others of preferring cool consideration to blind passion. Therefore the hopeless cling to the possibility, as the only one visible today and the last, that under present circumstances—to which the traditions of the past are not applicable—the interest of the English Isles cannot permit the downfall of the European continent, which economically as well as politically must shake England's position too, and must command English policy to pursue the reorganization of the European continent. Numerous and honest English voices have spoken in favor of this necessity, and if indeed to these moods arising more from ethical and humanitarian motives the insight into economic interest were joined, actions of policy could follow these words of good will. England can today be the arbiter of Europe. Its voice decides. It could, if it resolved to bring the powers of the continent together for a step-by-step reorganization of European affairs, be certain of a following not only among opponents and neutrals, but even among the insightful ones among yesterday's allies. If, however, even this small hope deceives, if France persists in its tragic spellboundness (*tragische Befangenheit*), while England, occupied overseas, restricts itself to pitying the continent as a half-participating spectator, then fate will fulfill itself. The economic self-destruction of the continent will be continued and lead to an invalidism of the peoples, wherein the non-emigrating part of the surplus millions, before it is consumed through hunger and wars, must surrender political and social conditions to manifold unrest. State conditions will not be able to escape a fatal instability that, outwardly and inwardly, must repeatedly tempt one to restore a lost position of equilibrium through sudden movements and daring resolves. This frame of mind will hardly be capable of holding back the dozen initially local wars that must arise out of the Balkanization of eastern Europe. About the character of the policy that is conducted in the eastern half of Europe and will draw the western into its spell, doubt is not permitted even today, when

the ink of the peace treaties is scarcely dry. From Estonia to Greece everyone arms against neighbor, mortal enemies lie in wait for one another, uprisings are stirred up, secret alliances concluded, dissolved again, and changed, and the European great powers, instead of mastering things and keeping the small ones in check, fight one another in a labyrinth of intrigues, be it for their own small advantages, be it for the advantages of their protégés, of which each has different ones. It is the old Balkans, enlarged, grown wild, and even less isolable than earlier. **7.** Germany is powerless, armless. It is economically shattered, spiritually broken. It is merely an object, no longer a subject of world events. To it remain only patience and hope. It can contribute little to the salvation of Europe, but that little it shall do. It must initially save itself psychically out of the state of osteomalacia (*Knochenerweichung*). It must defend itself against downfall with the means that remain to it, and not let itself be exploited without even moral resistance as a compulsory labor people (*Fronvolk*), only to succumb one day to passionate resolves of despair. It has no weapons and can yet defend itself in some matters with the law and the double pride of the vanquished. It should bring its internal affairs into order, and indeed in such a manner that state leadership, free from side-influences and considerations, objectively and calmly constantly walks the path of reason, offering foreign countries a contracting party of calculable reliability and tolerable endurance. To that belongs that the state is able to keep itself free from any overgrowth by the irresponsible machinery of special powers (*Sondermächte*). Against this danger there is no other security than the mindset of the people itself. Only a general state-feeling (*Staatsgefühl*) of the people itself can procure for the *de facto* governing party committees the freedom of objective decision and constant work. Here is opportunity enough to help and amend right and left. If it succeeds in ordering and consolidating things in the interior in this manner, if thus the poor, trampled country despite everything in the midst

of helpless confusion is able to offer the spectacle of state strength and quiet, then we will be able to defend with success before the world the thesis that Europe cannot recover without Germany and must recover with Germany; and a Germany as spokesman of Pan-European mindset will ultimately be heard, understood, and heeded. Germany has today and for all time no other policy to conduct than a Pan-European one. It would have done wisely even in the decades before the war to conduct or even dream of no other. One cannot conduct a world policy in all parts of the earth in the heart of Europe with wide open borders, in the midst of hostile neighbors protected in their rear. Immature dreams have avenged themselves horribly. If before the war political opinions in Germany wavered shiftlessly between two equally thoughtless extremes—on the one side the stupid belief in mere force and even more in its empty gesture, on the other side the pious child's delusion of international goodness—the ones as the others should indeed today be cured or comprehend that European mindset, not only according to the ideal tradition of the German spirit, but according to the soberest interest, is the true national mindset of the German. Wilhelm von Humboldt writes in a memorandum addressed to Baron vom Stein of December 1813: "Germany must be free and strong in order to nourish the necessary self-feeling, to pursue its national development quietly and undisturbed, and to be able permanently to maintain the beneficent position that it occupies in the midst of the European nations for the same." More we do not want, can and shall not want. But to demand as our right and strive for with decisiveness as much as this, we do not cease. Defenseless in the heart of Europe, trampled and tormented, we suffer European suffering: knowing that Europe will recover with us or perish. **8.** Not enough that mankind is destined to suffer—it entices it to want to discover and believe a total meaning (*Gesamtsinn*). It seeks it now here, now there; but the theories, perhaps a fleeting consolation for women and children, only confuse events already confused enough. World history

is not unambiguous. It does not lead a straight, albeit stony path slowly upwards to some height of the human race. It is a constant struggle among many goals, repeatedly crosses its own intentions, entangles itself in its own threads, no longer finds its way around and begins anew, constantly changes the bearer of its plans and errs time and again. It has its *corsi* and *ricorsi*, and to all the rest, the upward of one is still the downward of the other. World history has no total meaning. Progress is a moral demand, but not a historical fact. All meaning is human work and human task and cannot be found in history if it is not wrung from it. The world is not arranged in such a way that it could tolerate the invention of every new machine, not endanger through the one achievements the others and ultimately destroy itself through its own works. World history was hitherto the history of Europe. It will in the future be first the history of the English Isles, the American continent, and East Asia. Europe itself is engaged in a process of regression (*Rückbildung*) and self-destruction. Whether that will perpetuate itself in a slow invalidism or whether a new thing will be able to arise out of it, Europeans will decide. History keeps many possibilities ready at all times. That holds true especially of crisis-filled times, which never let themselves be seen behind the mostly grimacing mask. There it is idle to hang after formulas and, for example, wish to establish that now the time of national states is past or the capitalist order will yield to a socialist one. History resists all such isms and occasionally, to the mockery of mankind, lets the newest socialism turn into an already known nationalism or a reactionary small-capitalism, lets a Brusilov climb onto the shoulders of a Radek, lets literati and prophets quietly drive their lesser but loud existence, in order perhaps one day, when the wild fog clears, mockingly to point to the two age-old powers that have remained standing upright because no shouting affects them: to the peasant and the Church. But it can mock us only because in the large it wants nothing and in the small continually assigns us anew to give it a will. The meaning of

events can only be evaluated from the individual organic thing that, in ever new starts, struggling, conquering, collapsing, and resurrecting again, wrestles for its kind of meaning. To this day mankind is no such living-organic thing. Whether distress, danger, and common interest will be able to shape it together into such a thing, or at least communities of peoples will form and, once formed, gradually expand; whether the International of the proletariat or of capital, making use of this or that people, reaching across national formations and limitations, will create a super-national and yet organic thing, is today still left to the ones to hope, the others to fear, the third to doubt. Until further notice, peoples remain the living-organic thing and therewith the bearers of history and the shapers of its meaning. Great peoples can indeed fall abruptly from their height. But no fall can and may be a definitive one for them. They can suffer and postpone hopes by centuries, but they die only when they cease to form, to preserve, and, as best as possible, to wring their own meaning time and again from what struggles against it all around.